



Office of the President

May 16, 2014

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Dr. Mike Rogers
Assistant Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Board of Regents
University System of Georgia
270 Washington Street
Atlanta, GA 30334-1450

Dear Dr. Rogers:

I would like to express my strong support for Dr. Dovile Budryte's application for the Regents' Teaching Excellence Award. Dovile is a challenging and enthusiastic teacher, an inspiring and caring mentor, a productive scholar and a dedicated member of the GGC community. She has contributed significantly to helping GGC implement its Quality Enhancement Plan on the internationalization of the curriculum. Her passion for empowering the students and transforming them into global citizens deserves recognition.

Dovile has taught "with the students," as she says, at GGC since fall 2007. During that time, she has taught more than one thousand students in both lower level and upper level Political Science courses. Dovile was also part of the team that developed our Political Science Program, which has a strong international focus. Although this program is still in its infancy (it is only five years old), Dovile's students have been accepted into graduate schools at UGA, Old Dominion University, the University of Utah, the George Washington University, and the London School of Economics and Political Science, which is rated # 2 in the world by the QS World University Rankings. Dovile's students have published in peer-reviewed journals and made a difference in Georgia by joining the activities of organizations such as GALEO (the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials) and the League of Women Voters. This year, one of Dovile's students obtained an internship at the Carter Center—an opportunity that usually and unfortunately very few students from outside the Ivy League are able to enjoy. The list goes on.

These examples of Dovile's influence and dedication embody one of the main missions of GGC—to empower our students with a top quality education at an open access institution. Undoubtedly, this demands a lot of work with the students and by the students, both in and outside of class. One of Dovile's strengths is to expose our students to global perspectives—even those who cannot study abroad. She does this in a variety of ways: by developing innovative approaches to teaching; inviting prominent guest speakers on the subject of Internalization to campus, and challenging her students to research. Her own experience as a reporter for the first private newspaper in post-Soviet Lithuania helps her to expose her students to the importance of civil liberties and provides a unique perspective on American government. Dovile's extensive research on international studies and teaching, including her third book, *Memory and Trauma in International Relations* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013) which is used as a textbook, helps Dovile to expose her students to the most cutting edge knowledge in Political Science.

For all of these reasons, I recommend Dr. Dovile Budryte without reservation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stas', is written over the word 'Sincerely' and the name 'Stanley'.

Stanley "Stas" C. Preczewski, Ph.D.
Interim President

May 16, 2014

Dear Dr. Rogers and the Members of the Board of Regents Selection Committee:

I strongly support the selection of Dr. Dovile Budryte for this year's Regents' Teaching Excellence Award.

Since Dr. Budryte's arrival at Georgia Gwinnett College in 2007, her devotion and commitment to our students has been obvious, consistent, and exemplary. Even at a teaching institution such as Georgia Gwinnett where our faculty are selected and hired for their excellence in teaching, Dr. Budryte stands out as the perfect embodiment of the *teacher-scholar* that all faculty dream of becoming. By inviting her students into the disciplinary practice, by encouraging undergraduate research, and by supporting student inquiry in a wide array of projects and contexts, including the area of internationalization, Dr. Budryte is truly one of those faculty who ensure that students acquire crucial skills, knowledge, and fundamental critical thinking early in their undergraduate years.

In the area of service, Dr. Budryte manages to combine her scholarly focus with students in some very good ways. As the faculty advisor to the Sigma Iota Rho academic honor society, she often arranges for her student members to meet and hear such prominent guest speakers as General Russ Weiskircher, the Vice-Chair of the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust, Jerry Gonzalez, Executive Director of the Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials (GALEO), Dr. Ilise Cohen of Emory University who spoke about the Justice Movement in Israel/Palestine, and Dr. Erica Resende of the Graduate Research Institute of Rio de Janeiro, all of whom are authorities about international topics, which is one of Dr. Budryte's passions and one of her areas of specialization.

And Dr. Budryte is indeed passionate about opening up the world to her students. As a specialist on internationalization, she has encouraged and helped a substantial number of GGC's students, many of whom are first-generation and who have never traveled abroad, to go to such countries as Chile, Russia, Guatemala, and Switzerland. She has spent innumerable hours helping these students write and complete their study abroad application forms as well as, in some cases, helping them to secure the funds and even the passports to make these trips possible. Students who would not have otherwise been able to travel internationally have been able to learn more about other peoples and other cultures because of Dr. Budryte.

Students who perhaps would not have become interested in international study or in attending graduate school also have benefited from knowing Dr. Budryte. She has helped GGC students to be accepted into such graduate schools as the George Washington University, the University of Utah, the University of Georgia, and Georgia State University.

But as strong as her belief in exposing students to new cultures through travel abroad is, she also invites her students to produce original research. Dr. Budryte has initiated, supported, and carried through a number of undergraduate research projects with her students. In fact, her students have presented at such conferences as the International Studies Association-South and the Georgia Political Association and also have even published articles during their undergraduate careers.

All of these particular student learning experiences perhaps trace to the central truth that Dr. Budryte herself is an active and avid researcher. Currently her fourth book, *Intersectionality and Student-Centered Learning*, is under contract with the University of North Georgia Press. What is remarkable about this work and her other three previously published books is that the primary focus of all four of Dr. Budryte's books is on the scholarship of teaching and learning (SOTL). Three of her works already have been used as textbooks. She thus epitomizes the best of the "*postmodern teacher-scholars*" in that her work with her students is and has been the subject of a great deal of her research. Despite having a heavy teaching load and service load, she also has published a total of 17 chapters in other scholarly books, has five refereed articles, and has delivered a total of 55 international, national, and state conference presentations as well as has been invited to give 24 other presentations.

Frequently seen in the food court with her students, she is known for working tirelessly for their success. During these food court sessions and in other contexts as well, Dr. Budryte conducts numerous informal study and review sessions. In small groups or in pairs, students receive extra time with her going over course material or furthering individual and group projects. She also advises and mentors a large number of students (over 50 students during the 2013-2014 academic year). She is always willing to meet with her advisees and help them in whatever ways necessary. To Dr. Budryte, "advising" also includes assisting her students in securing employment after graduation and internships. In fact, one of her advisees was the recipient of a highly competitive internship to the prestigious Carter Center in 2013.

And she does all of this because of her enthusiasm both for preparing her students for our increasingly global 21st-century and her passionate devotion to her students. Dr. Budryte is able to inspire students to go on travels that they never had dreamed of, to present their research at conferences they previously had never heard of, and to be accepted into graduate schools that they had never seriously considered applying to before they met Dr. Budryte.

Therefore, Dr. Budryte embodies the best of the professoriate; and for this reason, I recommend her without reservation for the 2013-2014 Regents' Teaching Excellence Award.



Lois C. Richardson, Ph.D.

Senior Vice-President for Academic and Student Affairs/Provost (acting)



May 7, 2014

Dr. Mike Rogers
Assistant Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
Board of Regents
University System of Georgia
270 Washington Street
Atlanta, Georgia 30334-1450

Dear Dr. Rogers:

I am writing to strongly recommend Dr. Dovile Budryte for the Regents' Teaching Excellence Award. Dr. Budryte has dedicated herself to teaching excellence, not only in herself, but in her colleagues. As a professor, she receives outstanding student evaluations. As one might expect of an outstanding professor, Dr. Budryte's evaluations capture her passion for the subject matter and for her students. Her evaluations reflect her knowledge and willingness to share that knowledge. And, her evaluations reflect creative techniques for teaching the material. While there is no question that she is an outstanding teacher, what is even more impressive is her track record of mentoring students and helping many of them get into prestigious graduate programs across the country. This is particularly impressive at Georgia Gwinnett College because we have an open access mission. We give everyone an opportunity to succeed. That means that many of our students arrive with all kinds of challenges. Dr. Budryte takes these students and helps them find their true potential. Students like Stephen Christian, who was accepted into the Ph.D. programs at the University of Utah and at Old Dominion; Aaron Lynch who was accepted into UGA's fast-track Ph.D. program; and Vesna Kurspahic who is currently at George Washington University, pursuing a master's degree in public policy and a fellowship at the Human Studies Institute. These are just some of her students whose lives are taking a trajectory they did not imagine possible until Dr. Budryte's guidance and mentorship led them into these great programs.

Dr. Budryte also serves as one of our assistant deans. In this capacity, she evaluates our faculty, maintaining them to the highest standards of teaching excellence. She works closely with all of our faculty to provide them with the very best feedback and support, so as to make them the best teachers that they can be. Dr. Budryte's commitment to excellence is further demonstrated in the leadership role she has demonstrated in training our faculty to internationalize the curriculum. Thanks to her leadership, Dr. Budryte has successfully trained all of our faculty in pedagogical techniques that expose and prepare our students for the global century. Thanks to Dr. Budryte's leadership, our students are being exposed to the world. Our students are now better prepared to appreciate the diversity and richness of cultures and people that our world has to offer,



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making our students better suited to represent our state and our country when they interact with people from abroad.

Dr. Budryte is always looking for new ways to interact with the broader community. She is an engaged member of our community, and dedicates a significant amount of time to creating opportunities for our students. Her commitment and dedication to our students and to our community is extraordinary. It is with these thoughts in mind that I strongly recommend Dr. Dovile Budryte for the Regents' Teaching Excellence Award.

Sincerely,

Dr. Adolfo Santos
Dean of the School of Liberal Arts

April 25, 2014

To the Selection Committee

Re: Dr. Dovile Budryte

I write this letter to express my unreserved recommendation in support of Dr. Dovile Budryte's nomination for the University System of Georgia Excellence in Teaching Award 2014-2015. I have known Dr. Budryte since 2011 when I joined Georgia Gwinnett College as a fulltime faculty in the political science discipline. In expressing my unreserved support for her nomination for this award, I would like to speak about her role as a teacher and her passion as an educator to her students. As a teacher, Dr. Budryte possesses qualities both in the classroom and outside the classroom which are absolutely admirable. I have had the honor of being invited to her classroom on a number of occasions to observe and evaluate her teaching as part of the mentor-mentee relationship between us. In terms of content, Dr. Budryte's command of the knowledge of the material is very deep and she does an excellent job of combining her theoretical and conceptual knowledge with empirical examples from past and current events to bring the classroom to life. She has a great way of using technology to enhance her teaching and to emphasize key concepts through the use of short videos, statistical data and resort to websites to help students better grasp the concepts she is teaching.

Dr. Budryte has set very high standards and expectations of all her students. In her upper level classes, which I happened to observe when she taught Senior Seminar, I was quite amazed and impressed with how she kept the discussions going with her students. She has a great technique of gently prodding students to answer the questions and redirecting them to the subject matter and the key point when they seemed to go off target. The ability to initiate, sustain and control classroom discussions is a quality, which I believe does not come easily to all but the best of teachers such as Dr. Budryte. I am also aware that she seeks opportunities to improve her teaching by reading scholarship on teaching and learning and attending seminars.

On numerous occasions I have had the opportunity to discuss my teaching pedagogy and to seek her advice on best practices to help improve my own teaching. I have also had the honor of having Dr. Budryte visit my class on two occasions to observe my teaching and she was very graceful in giving me constructive criticisms on my teaching style and techniques which have gone a long way to help me improve upon my teaching. On many other occasions, Dr. Budryte has been the first person I seek out when I need support on how to handle situations with my students and she has always been willing to share her experiences and advise me accordingly.

Dr. Budryte extends her excitement and passion for teaching outside the classroom. She is keenly involved in engaging students within the wider GGC community through her ardent participation in extracurricular events. She has been very active in inviting excellent speakers from outside of GGC to deliver lectures to both students and faculty. Such talks have included topics on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the current political crises in Ukraine. In addition, she serves as the faculty advisor for the Sigma Iota Student Club and co-advisor for the Model United Nations Club where she engages a wider audience of students on a daily basis.

Sincerely,

J. Dawuni

Josephine J. Dawuni, Esq., Ph.D.
Asst. Professor of Political Science
Faculty Advisor- African Voice
Georgia Gwinnett College
Lawrenceville, GA 30043

April 24, 2014

Dear Selection Committee:

I have been fortunate enough to have been taught by many amazing faculty at Georgia Gwinnett College, but my former academic adviser and forever mentor Dr. Dovile Budryte has been the most inspiring.

In class, Dr. Budryte engaged me and fellow classmates to think in novel and exciting ways. A class with her was never mundane and always insightful. Her pedagogy is to constantly inspire students while challenging them. Her lectures are passionate, erudite, and entertaining. Yet with all of her expertise and excitement, she is not one to display hubris or arrogance. In her classroom, students' beliefs and ideas are discussed and debated, not authoritatively shot down. Through encouraging students to engage the lessons in class, her lessons feel less like bottom-down lectures and more like stimulating and holistic discussions.

I have also been fortunate enough to learn just how knowledgeable Dr. Budryte is on social theory in international relations. Having read her published works on geographic areas like the Balkans and concepts like feminism, nationalism, and the politics of memory, I can testify that she has an adroit understanding of how to contribute to the field of international relations theory and apply those contributions to today's salient political problems. In the discipline of international relations, theory is too often overlooked by scholars. The cost of this has been the discipline's general failure to both critically assess the status quo in global politics and practically apply abstract thinking to current events. It is therefore refreshing to find people like Dr. Budryte who realize this problem and are trying to solve it through groundbreaking research.

As my former faculty advisor and current mentor, Dr. Budryte has been imperative in my academic achievements. When I was an undergraduate student, I would frequently visit Dr. Budryte to discuss my current and future research initiatives. Her feedback allowed me to understand the limits and potentials these initiatives had. In one instance which she was incredibly helpful was in my research on ontological security theory in international relations. With her advice, I was able to take this fascinating theory and find an applicable case study to scrutinize it. With her guidance in my finding and synthesizing of information, I was able to produce an essay that would be published in the national peer-reviewed journal of Sigma Iota Rho, an honor society for students of international studies.

It is because of Dr. Budryte's motivation that I have made outstanding achievements in my education. Without her, I would have been neither published nor accepted to first-tier graduate international relations programs like those at London School of Economics and American University. She continues to both take interest in my studies and offer me valuable information about what I need to do one day have a successful career as a university professor. It is because of all this that I want to recommend Dr. Budryte for the Teaching Award.

Sincerely,

Stephen Michael Christian *Stephen Michael Christian*
schristi@ggc.edu

April 24, 2014

Dear Regents' Teaching Excellence Awards Committee,

At George Gwinnett College, there are many great teachers who clearly love what they do, the courses they teach, and the topics they research. Dr. Budryte is one of many who fit this description. With her extensive background in international relations, especially in the Baltic region, she is able to use interesting anecdotes and a plethora of personal experiences that make the most banal subjects fascinating.

Nevertheless, Dr. Budryte is very unique in that she does not only employ innovative teaching methods, but she also inspires her students to go above and beyond inside and outside the classroom. Though her schedule is demanding with the tasks associated with her jobs as a teacher, researcher, student advisor, and administrator, Dr. Budryte never complains and always has time for her students and anyone else who seeks her advice. In my personal experience, she inspired me to study abroad (for the first time in my life), an idea I initially thought impossible due to personal reasons at the time. She also helped me get into the University of Georgia, where I completed my undergraduate studies. Fortunately for me, our relationship did not end there. Three years later, she helped me get into a graduate program at the The George Washington University. She has played a major role in every major decision that I have had to make in academia (i.e. study abroad, graduate school, etc). Moreover, my conversations with Dr. Budryte about European, North American, and Latin American affairs made me more curious about the world, which is the primary reason why I decided to major in International Affairs in the first place. Though I am one student, I know that Dr. Budryte has had a very positive influence on many students at GGC.

Dr. Budryte not only cares about teaching as all professors should, but she goes above and beyond her job description. Dr. Budryte adds new dimensions to the word "teacher" by acting flawlessly as a professor, an advisor, a career consultant, and a friend. The students at GGC are fortunate to have her, and I am personally indebted to her for everything she has done for me. If you have any questions, please call me at (770) 315-2266 or email me at fiskjustin@gwu.edu.

Best regards,

Justin Fisk

Abbreviated CV

DOVILĖ BUDRYTĖ, Ph.D.
Georgia Gwinnett College

(678) 478-5275
dbudryte@ggc.edu

Professional Appointments:

Associate Professor of Political Science, Georgia Gwinnett College (2007-present)
Assistant Dean for Faculty Evaluation (Social Sciences), GGC (2011-present)
Associate Professor of International Studies, Brenau University, Georgia (2005-07)
Assistant Professor of International Studies, Brenau University, Georgia (2000-05)
Contractual Researcher, Global Concepts, Inc., Virginia (1996-98)

Education:

Ph. D., International Studies, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, *Summa cum Laude*, 2000
M. A., International Studies, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, Virginia, *Summa cum Laude*, 1998

B. A., Communications, Walsh University, North Canton, Ohio, *Summa cum Laude*, 1994
Studies in Journalism, Vilnius University, Lithuania, 1989-1991

Awards:

Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award, Georgia Gwinnett College, 2014

Nominee, Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award, GGC, 2013

Nominee, Outstanding Student Engagement Award, GGC, 2014

Nominee, Research/Creative Activities Award, GGC, 2011 and 2010

Nominee, Service Award, GGC, 2010 and 2009

Nominee, Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies Best Book Award, 2006

Ann Austin Johnston Outstanding Faculty Member Award (the highest award for teaching at Brenau University), 2004

Greek Council Faculty Member of the Year (the highest award for campus service and teaching at Brenau University; selected by students), 2004

Certificate of Recognition, Dean of Student Affairs, Brenau University, 2007, 2006, 2005, 2004, 2003, 2002.
Awarded to faculty members nominated by graduating students.

Grants and Fellowships: *Twenty-six grants and fellowships (selected):*

- *Two SEED grants to pursue SOTL, "From Emotion to Critical Thinking? Teaching about the Politics of Trauma in the College Classroom" (with Josephine Dawuni), 2014-15 and "Intersectionality as a Paradigm in Educational and Policy Settings: A Comparative Study" (with C. Douglas Johnson), Georgia Gwinnett College, 2009-10*
- *Grant to attend to the 2014 Curt C. and Else Silberman Seminar "Teaching about the Holocaust in the Soviet Union: Perpetrators, Collaborators, Bystanders, and Victims," US Holocaust Memorial Museum*
- *Venture Research Workshop Grant, "Memory Trauma and Change in World Politics: The Social and Political Implications of Forgetting and Remembering Emotional Events" (with Erica Resende), which attracted scholars from six countries, International Studies Association (ISA), 2010-2011*
- *LEAP (Leadership in Education for Advanced Professionalism) grant to pursue SOTL research and organize a workshop, Brenau University, 2006*
- *National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Summer Research Stipend, 2004*

Service at GGC (Selected):

Faculty Advisor, Sigma Iota Rho (International Studies Honors Society), GGC, 2011-present

Faculty Co-advisor, Model United Nations, GGC, 2013-present

Faculty Advisor, Pride Alliance, GGC, 2007-2011

Lead, Annual Program Review and Assessment (Political Science), 2012-present

Point of Contact between the Office of Internationalization and the School of Liberal Arts, 2012-present

Internationalized Learning Essentials Faculty Facilitator, Summer 2013 and Summer 2014

Discussant and participant, Intersections Conference (student-centered), GGC, Spring 2012, 2013 and 2014

Co-organizer, Conference to Commemorate World War I (involves students), GGC, November 2014

Member (elected), Promotions and Credentialing Committee, School of Liberal Arts, 2008-2011

Service to the Discipline (Selected):

Served as an Organizer, Chair or Discussant in *twenty-three conferences and workshops*, including serving as a discussant on student panels in International Studies Association-South conference

Member of the Editorial Board, *Ethnicity Studies* (a peer-reviewed journal) and EyeCorner Press

Grant reviewer, NEH (2013) and Carnegie Council on Ethics and International Affairs (2002)

Peer reviewer for 13 academic journals, including *International Journal of Multicultural Education*, *Millennium* and *International Studies Review*

Book manuscript reviewer, *Routledge* and *Ashgate*

Paper proposal reviewer, ISSOTL 2013 conference, Raleigh, North Carolina

Course and Program Designer, BA in Transatlantic Studies, University System of Georgia, 2007-2011, BA in Political Science, GGC, 2007-2008, BA in International Studies, Brenau University, 2000-01

Community Service (Selected):

Seventeen media interviews, including Gwinnett Daily Post, WDUN radio (Gainesville, GA), and *Scholars' Circle* (Progressive and Independent Pacifica Radio Los Angeles)

Sixteen publications in popular press, including *Gainesville Times*, Readnsurf (a website based in India) and *delfi.lt* (a website based in Lithuania)

Member (elected), Governing Council of Atlanta's Lithuanian community, 2010-present

Publications (Selected):

Three published books (all used as textbooks), one SOTL book forthcoming in 2014, five articles in peer-reviewed journals, seventeen book chapters, ten encyclopedia entries, and fourteen book and film reviews

- *Intersectionality and Student-Centered Learning: Teaching Methodologies in Transformative, Multicultural Classroom Environment*, a collection of essays on teaching, University Press of North Georgia (under contract), forthcoming in 2014 (Book)
- *Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases and Debates* (editor, with Erica Resende), Routledge, 2013 (Book)
- *Feminist Conversations: Women, Trauma and Empowerment in Post-Transitional Societies* (editor, with Lisa M. Vaughn and Natalya T. Riegg), Rowman and Littlefield/University Press of America, 2009 (Book)
- *Taming Nationalism? Political Community Building in the Post-Soviet Baltic States*, Ashgate, 2005. Reviewed in seven academic journals. Used for seven university courses in five countries (Book)
- "The Experience of Trauma and Political Activism: A Case Study of Women 'Agents of Memory' in Lithuania," *Journal of Baltic Studies*, vol. 41, no. 3 (2010), pp. 331-50 (Journal article, peer-reviewed)
- "Minority Rights and the Majority's Insecurities: Building Tolerant Political Communities in the Post-Soviet Baltic States," *Essays in Arts and Sciences*, vol. 34, no. 2 (2005), pp. 37-54 (journal article, peer-reviewed)
- "Džiunglių" pamokos (The Lessons of "The Jungle," in Lithuanian), an introductory chapter to the Lithuanian edition of Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle*, Aukso žuvys, 2012, pp. 51-56 (book chapter)
- "The Idea of Europe in Selected World History Textbooks Used in the United States" (with Charles Perrin), in *Transatlantic*, edited by Camelia Elias and Andrea Birch, Aalborg University Press (Denmark), 2006, pp. 41-54 (book chapter)

Presentations

Twenty-four invited presentations, including the Center for Teaching Excellence at North Georgia College and State University, School of Liberal Arts at Kennesaw University, the University of Cincinnati, Xavier University (Ohio), Miami European Union Center of Excellence (Florida International University), Danish Institute for International Studies and the University of Latvia

- "Toward a Transformative Classroom: Creating Reflective Identities in Multicultural Settings," North Georgia College and State University, September 2011
- "Social Integration, Adaptation, or Segmentation? Minority Rights Issues and Discourses in Lithuania since EU Expansion," Conference "Unity in Diversity? Diversity and European Union Integration," Miami European Union Center of Excellence, Florida International University, Miami, April 2008
- "Commemorating Forced Migration," EUSTORY (History Network for Young Europeans) Symposium, "Commemorating 20th Century Migration in National Societies," Warsaw, January 2005

- “Assessing Critical Thinking,” Faculty Meeting, School of Liberal Arts, Kennesaw State University, Georgia, March 2004

Fifty-five conference presentations, including Georgia Conferences on College and University Teaching, International Studies Association, Yale Conference on Baltic and Scandinavian Studies, National Women’s Studies Association and Georgia Political Science Association meetings, conferences at Lund, Humboldt and Glasgow universities.

- “Tolerance Education in the Political Science and International Studies Classroom? Applying Insights from the Intersectionality Literature to the Study of Global Issues,” International Studies Association Annual Conference, Toronto, March 2014
- “Intersectionality in Theory and Practice: From Conceptual Issues to Practical Examples in Political Science and International Studies Classroom,” International Studies Association Annual Convention, San Francisco, April 2013
- “Applying Insights from Literature on Intersectionality to Teaching Introductory Political Science Classes,” 19th Georgia Conference on College and University Teaching, Kennesaw University, February 2012
- “An Emerging Subfield: Exploring the Production, Evocation and Contestation of Memory in International Politics,” joint British International Studies Association and the International Studies Association Conference, Edinburgh, June 2012
- “Imaginary Interviews: Understanding Leadership and Human Behavior,” 15th Georgia Conference on College and University Teaching, Kennesaw State University, February 2008

REFLECTIVE STATEMENT

I. Passionately Teaching with Students: Bringing the World and the World of Research to GGC’s Students

“Tell me and I forget. Show me and I will remember. Involve me and I will understand.”

This Chinese proverb captions the essence of effective teaching. It also identifies one of the greatest challenges that teachers face in today’s diverse classrooms: keeping students with very different learning styles and from very different backgrounds involved and excited about the material. In our global twenty-first century, it is impossible to be an effective teacher without finding a way to relate to students from different cultures and backgrounds. This task is especially paramount to me—a foreign born, foreign trained instructor—teaching outside of my home country.

Originally from Lithuania, a former Soviet republic, I pursued my college education in four countries—Lithuania, the United States, Denmark and Germany. I have had first-hand experience of various educational systems: *top-down, didactic and teacher-centered in Soviet Lithuania, decentralized and student-centered in the United States, project-based and egalitarian in graduate school in Denmark, and highly specialized and research-centered in Germany.* These systems have their strengths and weaknesses; however, in all cases, the best professors engaged in similar behavior and exhibited similar traits: their passion for the subject matter was obvious. The best teachers were not afraid to show emotion about what they were teaching. They also knew my name and where I came from. They cared passionately about my success. Now that I am the teacher, I try to do the same for the students in my classes.

I also love the subjects—American Government and International Politics—that I teach. Growing up in the former Soviet Union, I listened to Radio Free Europe and the Voice of America, hoping to learn more about the “arch-enemy,” the United States. Little did I know that I will have the privilege to teach American Government in the United States! My experience living under a non-democratic regime, and then when I worked as a reporter for the first private newspaper in independent Lithuania and participated in pro-democracy demonstrations in the early nineties have helped me to introduce an emotionally moving perspective on civil liberties and civil rights—both universal aspirations and the essential foundations of the

government of the United States. I also maintain an in-depth knowledge of what I teach by conducting research, getting engaged in academic activities, and traveling extensively.

This is one of the reasons why I strive to 'open up the world' to my students. I encourage all my students to travel extensively, both inside the United States and beyond, as often as possible. As the liaison between the School of Liberal Arts and the GGC Office of Internationalization, also I have facilitated integrative internationalized learning for our students in Russia, Chile, Switzerland, Ireland, Great Britain, and France. Since Spring 2008 I have organized, in cooperation with the League of Women Voters, annual field trips to the Georgia General Assembly to expose my students to local politics and government. I have organized numerous student-centered campus events, including a speech by General Russ Weiskircher, the Vice Chairman of the Georgia Commission on the Holocaust (and a liberator of Dachau concentration camp) on the importance of civic engagement and the legacy of the Holocaust, the first celebration of Women's History Month at GGC, the first celebration of national Coming Out Day, and a panel discussion of immigration issues featuring Jerry Gonzalez, the Executive Director of GALEO.

A number of SOTL research studies suggests the internationalization of Political Science courses is linked to the development of important skills, such as critical thinking and reflexivity. For example, Steven Lamy (2007) argues that "global perspectives courses encourage students to carefully examine their assumptions, values, and beliefs—not to convert them to a different worldview, but to encourage them to understand how their images of the world can both liberate and limit." Thus, helping students both to travel abroad and within the United States results in illustrating the interconnectedness of the world as well as enables students to develop and express their own world views and perspectives.

Also, as I mentioned earlier, the best teachers/mentors I had when I was earning my degree, passionately loved the subject matter they were teaching and stayed current by being avid researchers. Now that I have crossed over from 'student' to 'faculty,' I have emulated my mentors by maintaining an active research agenda, despite having heavy teaching and service loads at Georgia Gwinnett College. I do so because I am passionate about staying current in my field so that I can give to my students the cutting edge knowledge in my discipline that they deserve to have their professor give to them. Currently, my fourth book, a SOTL project which I am co-writing with my GGC Colleague, Dr. C. Douglas Johnson and Dr. Anna Kuthy of Brescia College; is under contract at the University of North Georgia Press. My other three books, *Intersectionality and Student-Centered Learning: Teaching Methodologies in Transformative, Multicultural Classroom Environment*, a collection of essays on teaching, *Memory and Trauma in International Relations: Theories, Cases and Debates*, *Feminist Conversations: Women, Trauma and Empowerment in Post-Transitional Societies*, are all used as textbooks. I also have published 5 referred articles and 17 chapters in other scholarly books. Also, I have delivered 55 international, national, and state conference presentations, as well as have been invited to give 24 presentations.

And most importantly of all, I not only engage in research myself; I also encourage my students to engage in research.

In fact, my students' success is probably one of the best indicators of effective teaching and student engagement. They have presented papers which they wrote in my classes at academic conferences, such as the *International Studies Association-South*, the *Georgia Political Science Association* and the *Intersections conference* at GGC. One student whose research I supervised (Stephen "Michael" Christian) won an internal GGC's SEED grant to travel to Washington, D.C. to conduct interviews with the leading experts in the field of international security. Our continued collaboration resulted in a publication on ontological security and intervention in Libya in *(the Journal of International Relations*, a peer-reviewed journal published by Sigma Iota Rho, the Honors Society for International Studies. In addition, I served as an academic advisor to Seijin Tranberg, GGC's first Fulbright Scholar, and was part of the team that helped him to win the Fulbright fellowship and other awards, such as acceptance to the prestigious Summer Institute for Future Global Leaders in the Caribbean at the University of the Virgin Islands.

One of my students, Katheryn Nikolich, wrote an excellent paper on suburban public policy in Gwinnett County for Senior Seminar that I taught in fall 2012. The purpose of this study was to explain urban sprawl and assess its consequences through a case study of Gwinnett County. Not only was Katheryn able to skillfully synthesize quantitative and qualitative research, her paper presented a wealth of original data from various sources, including the Georgia Board of Education, Gwinnett County Schools, the Gwinnett County Tax Assessor, and the US Agricultural Census to mention just a few. It was presented at the Southern Political Science Association's annual meeting in January 2013. I nominated the paper for the Roger N. Pajari Undergraduate Paper Award awarded by Georgia Political Science Association (GPSA) to the best undergraduate paper submitted to meet the requirements of an undergraduate political science course taught in Georgia. ***Katheryn tied for the first prize.*** Her paper will be published in the Proceedings of GPSA.

Currently Katheryn is pursuing graduate studies at Georgia State University. Many other of my former students are doing the same—at the University of Georgia, the George Washington University, and the University of Utah, to mention a few. Stephen “Michael” Christian, who graduated in summer 2013, was accepted to the graduate program at the London School of Economics. .

*I also arranged for Justin Fisk, one of the first GGC students, to study abroad in Guatemala in 2009. Justin was later accepted into the prestigious graduate program in International Relations at George Washington University. According to Justin's letter of recommendation, which is included in this application, “Dr. Budryte is very unique in that she does not only teach her students incredibly well, but she also inspires them inside and outside the classroom.” I believe that integrative learning (inspiring students to pursue learning not only in the classroom, but outside of it as well) is essential in order to *effectively teach with students.**

Yes, you read that correctly—**teaching with students**. *Teaching with students implies that learning is based on interconnectedness, reciprocity and cooperation. The students are part of a responsible relationship, the goal of which is to understand the complexities of current global realities.* To establish such relationships in my classroom, I use a variety of teaching styles and innovative teaching methods, including interactive lectures, in-class and online discussions, group projects, critical thinking exercises, policy briefs, research papers, analysis of mass media accounts, novels and guest speakers. I continuously revise and update my courses to keep up with changes in the field of Political Science and its subfield, International Relations (IR). In addition to studying the most important information in the discipline, my students are engaged in constructing their own knowledge about the topics discussed in class and covered in the assigned readings. They are challenged to engage in critical thinking by conducting guided research and by exploring different perspectives on important political issues and governmental structures. So, just as my favorite teachers passionately cared about my learning, now that I am the faculty member, I passionately care about ensuring that my students really learn by teaching **with** my students.

So, every day, ***both inside and outside the classroom***, I work to open up the world to my students and show them the interconnectedness of our current world. I do this, not only through inspiring them to present at conferences and publish articles and to travel internationally and domestically, but also through the use of innovative assignments, by joining such student organizations as the Sigma Iota Rho Academic Honor Society, and through mentoring and advising my students outside the classroom.

Only by using such varied and multiple means can I reach out to my students, teach with them, and show them today's complex and increasingly global world.

II. Evidence of Quality of Teaching with Students, Inside and Outside the Classroom

As I have mentioned previously, **I strongly believe that my students' success is the best evidence of my success.** In order to ensure that they are successful, **I have found that I need to actively work with them both inside and outside the classroom.** Therefore, in the following section, I describe the various methods and activities that I use to help my students.

These range from my challenging myself and pushing myself to devise innovative and engaging teaching methods and assignments, to my advising/mentoring students outside the classroom, to my work as the faculty advisor of the Sigma Iota Rho Academic Honor Society, to my conducting extra study sessions outside class to help my students learn, to helping my students secure internships at such places as the Carter Center.

A. *Summary of Student Evaluations for All Classes Taught at GGC (Fall 2007-Fall 2013)*

The average scores in my student *evaluations in the categories of instructional design, instructional delivery and student engagement* are **3.7 out of 4**. (These scores are based on the available institutional data for all of the classes that I have taught at GGC since Fall 2007, 75% of which were sections of POLS 1101, a required class.) The summary of all of my student evaluations at GGC (Fall 2007-Spring 2013) shows *great consistency in the scores*.

Term	Courses Taught	# of Students in class	# of Responses	Response Rate	Instructional Design (out of 4)	Instructional Delivery (out of 4)	Student Engagement (out of 4)
Fall 13	POLS 1101 (1 section), POLS 2401 (1) POLS 4001 (1), POLS 4490 (1)	71	34	48%	3.8	3.8	3.9
Spr 13	POLS 1101 (2 sections), POLS 3400 (1)	76	37	49%	3.8	3.6	3.8
Fall 12	POLS 1101 (2), POLS 2401 (1), POLS 4490 (1)	87	62	71%	3.8	3.8	3.8
Spr 12	POLS 1101 (2), POLS 3400 (1)	67	24	36%	3.7	3.6	3.8
Fall 11	POLS 1101 (3), POLS 2401 (1)	68	18	26%	3.8	3.8	3.8
Spr 11	POLS 1101 (3), POLS 3400 (1)	89	31	35%	3.6	3.5	3.7
Fall 10	POLS 1101 (3) POLS 2401 (1)	87	32	37%	3.7	3.6	3.6
Spr 10	POLS 1101 (4)	100	GGC data lost				
Fall 09	POLS 1101 (3), POLS 2401 (1)	100	34/35	34.5%	3.7	3.7	3.7
Spr 09	POLS 1101 (4)	71	18	25%	3.8	3.7	3.7
Fall 08	POLS 1101 (3)	66	38	58%	3.8	3.8	3.7
Spr 08	POLS 1101 (3)	58	34	59%	3.6	3.7	3.6
Fall 07	POLS 1101 (3)	46	34/35	75%	3.7	3.8	3.5
Averages	3.6 classes/semester	76 students/ semester		46%	3.7	3.7	3.7

Notes: POLS 1101: American Government (required for all GGC students); 36 sections; POLS 2401: Current Global Issues (Area F course); 5 sections; POLS 3400: International Relations (POLS required course); 3 sections; POLS 4001: International Development (POLS elective); 1 section; POLS 4490: Senior Seminar (POLS required course); 2 sections

Missing data:

POLS 4998: Directed Research (Summer 2013). One student was registered for this class. The student did not fill out the evaluation.

All classes taught in Spring 2010. Data was lost. .

GGC 1000: First Year of College Seminar (Fall 2007). The Office of Institutional Effectiveness did not provide data for this class.

B. CTE Thank You Notes

In fall 2010, the GGC Center for Teaching Excellence (CTE) began the "Thank a Teacher Program" which formally recognizes unsolicited student feedback. In addition to numerous student email messages each semester, I have received several CTE notes. Here are some excerpts from these notes:

Student #1: *I'm surprised how much I remember because Government is not one of my interests, but you made it interesting and I am thankful for having you as a teacher. Good luck and I hope you always keep that same enthusiasm for teaching that you displayed in my class. (Fall 2010)*

Student #2: *Thank you for being passionate about Political Science. I am NOT interested in Political Science, and only took this course because it was required. However, because I have learned about American government from a strong, intelligent woman who wasn't even born an American citizen, I have a renewed respect for this area of study.*

I am impressed that you travelled to this country and learned to speak English better than a lot of our own citizens! It's inspiring to see your love of our government system, when you actually have another system to compare it to. Most of us born here just take it for granted and don't know any other way.

You are also very gracious and handled interruptions and strong opinions of some class members very well; you managed to be kind and firm at the same time. Although I am not planning to continue studies in Political Science, I am now an involved citizen who was proud to serve as an election poll worker, because of your influence! Thank you. (Fall 2010)

Student #3: *"It is almost a year like I had your class but I still remember a lot of what you taught us, students! Thank you for pushing us and make us study harder. I learnt many-many new things in your class so thank you very-very much." (Spring 2011)*

Student #4: *"I have had a really trying educational journey and somewhere along the line, I lost my confidence and trust until I had your class this semester. Within the first week, I was so intimidated and confused-I wanted to give up, I was going to give up. But you were so welcoming and empowering. You believed that I would be ok when I honestly did not. You supported me no matter the time of day or night. This encouraged me to work hard-not because I thought I could do it, but because I didn't want to let you down. This semester was hard for me but in the midst of it all, it was a pleasure coming to your class and learning so much. International Relations isn't so bad & I needed this because I now have hope again and I know that I CAN overcome anything I put my mind to, no matter how difficult. You are truly GREAT at what you do (and tough)!" (Spring 2012)*

Student #5: *"Mere words cannot express how grateful I am to have had Dr. Budryte as my instructor and advisor as well. Not only did I see her as a great instructor, she always encouraged and also challenged us students on the previous material we covered in class on a random basis.*

Student #6: *Her policy convinced me that she cared deeply about my success at Georgia Gwinnett College (GGC), and for that reason, I will forever be grateful for her anytime I think about my college experience at GGC.*

Student # 7: *As an advisor, she was always prompt in responding to her e-mails in a timely manner and most importantly, I could have been stuck at GGC for a long time because she made sure that all the courses I took counted toward my curriculum.*

Student #8: *Honestly, I could tell that she was always happy to fight for me because I saw the passion in her. Above all, she was my advocate and many professors described her as the best especially Dr. Mazin Tadros. Thank you GGC for hiring such a loyal and experienced instructor."* (Summer 2013)

C. Outside the Classroom: As the Faculty Advisor to Sigma Iota Rho International Relations Academic Honor Society

In Fall 2011, together with Dr. Anthony Pinder, the then Director of Internationalization, I started the GGC chapter of Sigma Iota Rho (SIR). Creating a new student club in a new college is not easy—it took determination and planning to attract new members (only a small number of students are qualified to join SIR) and to organize meaningful and educational events that can enhance learning. The organization has already contributed to the internationalization of campus by organizing events, mobilizing the students interested in International Studies and serving as a forum for discussion of current international political events.

1. **Campus-wide Events:** As a faculty advisor to the SIR Honor Society, I have been engaged in organizing several campus-wide events, specifically in 2014: **Dr. Ilise Cohen's (Emory University/Jewish Voice for Peace) lecture on February 7, 2014 (on the Justice Movement in Israel/Palestine)**; SIR student members introduced Dr. Cohen and moderated a Q&A session; there was a lot of student interest in the topic and getting engaged in non-governmental organizations;
2. **Dr. Oksana Klymovych's** (Emory University/National University of Kyiv, Ukraine) guest lecture and discussion on March 21, 2014;
3. **Dr. Erica Resende's** (a former Fulbright fellow, currently at the Graduate Research Institute of Rio de Janeiro) guest lecture and discussion on May 20, 2014. SIR student member originally from Brazil will introduce Erica; a Political Science (POLS) Senior will moderate the Q&A session. A group of students and faculty will meet with Dr. Resende after the event.

With SIR, last year 2013:

4. **Student/faculty panel "The Colombian Exchange: Drugs, Politics and the Coca Leaf" on April 1.** The panel was moderated by Stephen ("Michael") Christian, POLS Senior. The panelists included Dr. Quinones-Reyes (POLS), Dr. Berger (history), Matthew Montgomery (POLS major) and Jose Castano (a GGC student, originally from Colombia).
5. **Student conference organization: SIR is one of the co-sponsoring organizations for the upcoming conference on World War I (November 6-8, 2014).** SIR chapter will sponsor at least one student panel and a roundtable focusing on a prominent scholar who writes on World War I. We were able to identify a keynote speaker (Dr. Vejas Liulevicius from the University of Tennessee) and hope to involve the local community during the night of the keynote speech by Dr. Liulevicius and other activities.

SIR sponsored one student panel on global issues last year (2013) at the GGC *Intersections* conference.

In addition, I serve as a co-advisor (together with Dr. Josephine Dawuni) for **Model UN** student club. I will attend several activities in May.

D. Mentoring Students Outside the Classroom: Average (7 years at GGC): 27 students per semester

Many studies have shown that a long lasting relationship with an academic adviser helps to increase student retention and performance. Successful mentoring is much, much more than help with registration and academic challenges. It is about trust, dreaming together about a successful career in the future and caring about what is going on in the community and the world. Effective advising helps the students to develop what I call a **"glocal" perspective: being active locally on campus and in the community, but, at the same time, being**

aware of what it is going on globally. Developing a belief that individuals can make a difference and learning the ways to make a difference (while realizing that college education is key in this endeavor) is an indicator that a mentee has become “glocalized.” To move toward my “glocal” goal with the students, I focus on their immediate success in their classes (in cooperation with my colleagues and the Academic Enhancement Center (AEC), inform them about what is going on in the community and the ways to get engaged and empower them by inspiring to internationalize their curriculum and study abroad. Since 2011/12, I also serve as a liaison between the Office of Internationalization and the School of Liberal Arts at GGC, and one of my responsibilities is to advise students who will travel abroad.

AY 2013:

In Fall 2013, I advised (officially) **43 students** (Political Science majors, undecided and students in other disciplines). In Spring 2014, I have 16 active advisees.

As a liaison between the Office of Internationalization and SLA, I also ***advised 18 students about study abroad.***

<p><u>AY 2012:</u> Spring 2013: 26 students. In 2012-2013, I also advised 10 students who went to study abroad.</p>	<p><u>AY 2011:</u> Spring 2012: 22 students</p>
<p><u>AY 2010:</u> Spring 2011: 38 students</p>	<p><u>AY 2009:</u> Spring 2010: 38 students</p>
<p><u>AY 2008:</u> Spring 2009: 20 students</p>	<p><u>AY 2007:</u> Spring 2008: 14 students</p>

My advising/mentoring activities include the following:

- 1) I organize regular ***face-to-face meetings*** with my advisees to discuss classes, academic performance, practices that enable students to succeed in college and other activities for the Fall, Summer and Spring semesters. I cooperate with the AEC by serving as a tutor and organizing a student event featuring the most effective study practices;
- 2) ***Email communication:*** I keep in touch with my advisees regularly through e-mail, reminding them about important dates and setting up appointments for advising;
- 3) I am regularly engaged in ***informal advising:*** I hold discussions on a regular basis with my mentees and other students about the challenges that they face outside class and how to overcome these issues to do well academically. For example, in Fall 2013, I advised one student to change his major to make sure that he stays at GGC. I helped him to contact the faculty in his new major and learn about the course requirements and career opportunities.
- 4) I participate and help to organize POLS advisement sessions. These are semi-formal events organized by our discipline to strengthen professional relationships between students and faculty and to make sure that students are aware of the classes that will be offered in the upcoming semester.

On October 29, 2013 I participated and presented on study abroad in POLS “***Advisement Fest***”. I suggested inviting our successful former students to these events; my suggestion was taken into account in Spring 2014.

On September 23, 2014, I gave ***a presentation*** to POLS 2101 Introduction to Political Science section (taught by Dr. Scott Boykin) about POLS curriculum changes (focusing on the International Relations concentration) and potential career opportunities.

5) I provide relevant information about **internship opportunities**, **career opportunities**, and **graduate study** with degrees in Political Science to my advisees, helping them to choose a relevant concentration in the major.

For example, in Fall 2013, I recruited two students majoring in POLS to participate in GALEO (Georgia Association of Latino Elected Officials) Leadership Seminar in 2014. This seminar includes excellent networking opportunities and workshops created to develop leadership skills.

In Fall 2013, I helped Stephen “Michael” Christian, a GGC graduate, to obtain a **prestigious internship with the Carter Center**.

Other Service in Support of Student Career Enhancement and Student Advising:

I regularly advise students about majoring in Political Science, applying to graduate schools and career opportunities in International Relations and other fields. I provide help with the personal statements that students must include as part of their applications to graduate schools and applications for fellowships. In addition, I inform my students about special programs and other opportunities related to International Relations, such as the International week on campus and events in Atlanta. Specific examples of service in support of student career enhancement include the following:

1) **Letters of recommendation:** Since May 2013 until April 2014, *I wrote 30 letters of recommendation*, which included letters for graduate schools (successful applications to the LSE, University of GA, GA State, Old Dominion University, the American University, among others) and professional references (Gwinnett County School System, internships, and firms).

In Fall 2012 and Spring 2013, I wrote 27 letters of recommendation for students and 1 letter for a former GGC student.




2) I regularly serve as a **professional reference** for students majoring in POLS who are looking for a job.

3) I provided detailed comments on student personal statements submitted to **graduate schools**, their resumes, and the overall process of graduate school application. Since May 2013, I provided help (comments on their personal statements, letters of recommendation, and informal mentoring) to the following students with their applications to graduate schools: Katheryn Nikolich (GA State, History MA), Michael Christian (LSE, Old Dominion University, American University, University of Utah), and Aaron Lynch (PhD program, University of Georgia). All of these applications were successful.

Last year (2012-2013), I also provided help with at least **four personal statements** (submitted to two graduate schools, Georgia State University PhD program & UGA doctoral program, applications for the Marshall and Fulbright fellowships). The applications to the GA State doctoral program (PhD in POLS, Matt Montgomery) and the application for the Fulbright fellowship (Seijin Tranberg) were successful.

E. Opening Up the World to My Students: Travels Abroad & Domestically

Effective Liberal Arts education helps students to develop unorthodox ways of thinking and cross-cultural communication skills. Innovative teaching methods and study abroad, especially individualized programs, are useful tools to achieve these goals. At GGC, I help students to find the best programs for their individual needs. Also, to gather interesting information for my courses on Current Global Issues and others, I traveled to Egypt, Tunisia, Israel, Turkey, and several EU countries. My travel has helped me to recruit guest lecturers from Denmark and Brazil who presented at GGC.

<p>Justin Fisk, a student whom I helped to arrange to study abroad in Guatemala, in the summer 2009.</p> 	 <p>Stephen "Michael" Christian, a student whom I helped to arrange to study abroad in Geneva, Switzerland, in the summer 2011.</p>	<p>I am on a trip to Egypt to do research which I later used in my classes.</p> 
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F. Description of Specific Innovative Teaching Methods

It happens, and it is not pleasant. One day, I tried to resuscitate class discussion. It felt like pulling teeth. I tried different questions. Silence. I tried writing ideas on the white board. No response. I could feel rivers of sweat coming down my back. The next step was to torment myself: "What do I do now?"

So what did I do to 'save' this class?

Instead of trying to conduct class discussion myself, I decided to use the pedagogical technique of **role-playing** more innovatively. I chose one student every week to play the role of the author of the assigned readings. Instead of trying to conduct discussion myself, let the "role play" begin. For thirty minutes or so, a student "metamorphosed" into the author of the assigned readings and had to lead the class in discussion.

I was lucky: There were several outgoing, extroverted students in this class. They were the first to volunteer to participate in this experiment. The students who played the author had to answer the questions from the "audience." The "audience" was encouraged to criticize and comment on the validity of the arguments presented by the "author." The student who played the role of the author had to know the text well enough to respond to the criticisms and comments. After the exercise, the class discussed the errors made by the presenter as well as the best questions/responses. The class could have gone better.

Also, another innovative assignment I used in my classes is the "imaginary interview" exercise for my introduction to American Government class. One of my syllabi reads: **A "Conversation with a Politician."**

This assignment involves: 1) doing research on a prominent American politician and his/her contributions; 2) writing a short (4-5 paragraphs) biographical essay about this person; 3) writing a short imaginary conversation involving this person or an imaginary interview with this person (4-5 meaningful questions and answers); 4) presenting the conversation to the class.

To get some unofficial student feedback, I conducted an anonymous, unofficial survey at the end of the fall 2007 semester. 37 students in my 3 sections completed a voluntary anonymous survey. 33% (using the scale 4-1) strongly agreed that the 'work on the assignment was enjoyable.' This number was 49% for 3 out of 4. Only 5% strongly disagreed with the statement. 46% (4) strongly agreed that the assignment was challenging; 49% said that it was "challenging" (3 out of 4). Only 2.5% thought that it was not challenging. The majority (73%) strongly agreed that they learned interesting information about a famous politician. Sample comments include the following:

- "Need to continue this process. It gives opportunity to improve speaking skills and research abilities."
- "I think (that) it was a good assignment because you really had to find out every detail about that person since you may be asked questions about that person."

Other innovative assignments that I have created for my classes include the use of policy briefs, analyses of mass media accounts, and interactive lectures.

G. Various Other Photos of My Work with My Students

Small class sizes at GGC have helped me to develop meaningful professional relationships with my students and to learn about their incredible lives and struggles.

Chehrazad Mounaji, my advisee, is a case in point. She was born and raised in Morocco to an American father and a Moroccan mother. Unfortunately, her father passed away when Chehrazad was fourteen. Her mother managed to support her and even to help her find a way to the United States to study in college. However, shortly after Chehrazad started her studies at GGC, her mother lost her job, and Chehrazad had to find ways to support herself and her education. She was able to obtain a position as a Resident Assistant at GGC. At the same time, Chehrazad has been an active member of the GGC community. She was elected President of the GGC Student Muslim Association and a school senator. I meet regularly with Chehrazad to discuss her academic performance and personal challenges. Chehrazad shared her personal experiences of finding ways to survive in another country with other students during a panel on international education and occasionally in the classes that she took with me. Her intimate knowledge of Muslim culture, both in Morocco and the USA, was very useful in my International Development and International Relations classes.

At GGC, many students could identify with Chehrazad. Many of them (or their parents) are recent immigrants. To many, English is not their first language. ***Persuading them that their unique background can be an asset is crucial for successfully teaching with the students.***



Chehrazad Mounaji, POLS major & President of the GGC Muslim Association, and I during the International Relations Honors Society Induction Ceremony.

An extra study session I conducted for some of my POLS 1101 students before their final exam.



Rigoberto Rivera at the UN in Geneva, Switzerland.